

HAND-HELD HAIR DRYER AND HOLDER ASSEMBLY

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The invention relates generally to hand-held hair dryers and arrangements for hanging the hand-held hair dryers in holders mounted on supporting surfaces.

[0002] Hand-held hair dryer and holder assemblies are generally known. Examples of hand-held hair dryer and holder assemblies are disclosed in United States Patent Nos. 4,659,907 and Re. 36,995. Hand-held hair dryer and holder assemblies include a hand-held hair dryer and a housing or holder mounted on a wall or other supporting surface. The holder provides a location for storing the hand-held hair dryer when the hand-held hair dryer is not in operation. An electrical cord typically extends from the housing to the hand-held hair dryer to supply electrical current to the hand-held hair dryer.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Prior art hand-held hair dryer and holder assemblies include different lengths of cord extending from the hand-held hair dryer. Depending on the length of the cord, the cord can hang from the stored hand-held hair dryer and create a nuisance. The invention provides a cord hanging member on the housing which provides a convenient location to hang the cord when the hand-held hair dryer is not in operation so the amount of unsupported hanging cord is limited. The cord hanging member can be removably or integrally connected to the holder.

[0004] In one embodiment, the invention provides a hang-up hair dryer assembly that includes a hand-held hair dryer, a housing, an electrical cord, and a cord hanger. The housing is adapted for mounting to a supporting surface to provide a location for storing the hand-held hair dryer when the hand-held hair dryer is not in operation. The electrical cord extends from the hand-held hair dryer and electrically connects the hand-held hair dryer to a power supply. The cord hanger connects to the housing and supports a portion of the cord when the hand-held hair dryer is not in operation.

[0005] In another embodiment, the invention provides a hand-held hair dryer and holder assembly that includes a hand-held hair dryer, a holder, an electrical cord, and a cord hanging member. The holder is adapted for mounting to a supporting surface. The holder provides a location for storing the hand-held hair dryer when the hand-held hair dryer is not in operation.

The electrical cord extends between the holder and the hand-held hair dryer. The cord includes a first portion connected to the holder, a second portion connected to the hand-held hair dryer, and a third portion extending between the first portion and the second portion. The cord hanging member connects to the holder and is adapted to support the third portion of the cord when the hand-held hair dryer is not in operation.

[0006] In yet another embodiment, the invention provides a method of storing a hand-held hair dryer when the hand-held hair dryer is not in use. The method includes providing a hand-held hair dryer and a housing sized to releasably receive at least a portion of the hand-held hair dryer to provide a location for storing the hand-held hair dryer when the hand-held hair dryer is not in operation. The method also includes connecting a cord hanger to the housing and mounting the housing to a supporting surface. The hand-held hair dryer is electrically connected to a power supply using an electrical cord extending from the hand-held hair dryer. A user releasably secures the hand-held hair dryer on the housing and releasably supports a portion of the electrical cord on the cord hanger when the hand-held dryer is not in operation to limit an amount of unsupported cord hanging from the hand-held hair dryer.

[0007] Further objects of the present invention together with the organization and manner of operation thereof, will become apparent from the following detailed description of the invention when taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings wherein like elements have like numerals throughout the drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] The present invention is further described with reference to the accompanying drawings, which show an embodiment of the present invention. However, it should be noted that the invention as disclosed in the accompanying drawings is illustrated by way of example only. The various elements and combinations of elements described below and illustrated in the drawings can be arranged and organized differently to result in embodiments which are still within the spirit and scope of the present invention. Also, it is understood that the phraseology and terminology used herein is for the purpose of description and should not be regarded as limiting. The use of "including," "comprising," or "having" and variations thereof herein is meant to encompass the items listed thereafter and equivalents thereof as well as additional items. Unless specified or limited otherwise, the terms "mounted,"

“connected,” and “coupled” are used broadly and encompass both direct and indirect mountings, connections, and couplings. Further, “connected” and “coupled” are not restricted to physical or mechanical connections or couplings. Additionally, unless specified or limited otherwise, the terms “top,” “bottom,” “upper,” “lower,” “forward,” “rearward,” “outward,” “inward,” “sideward,” “downward,” and “upward” and variations thereof as used herein are not meant to indicate a particular direction, but rather a relative direction with respect to the context of the discussion.

[0009] FIG. 1 is perspective view of a hand-held hair dryer and holder assembly embodying various features of the invention.

[0010] FIG. 2 is a front view of a holder of the assembly shown in FIG. 1.

[0011] FIG. 3 is a rear view of the holder shown in FIG. 2.

[0012] FIG. 4 is a front view of a cord hanging member of the assembly shown in FIG. 1.

[0013] FIG. 5 is a side view of the cord hanging member shown in FIG. 4.

[0014] FIG. 6 is a rear view of the cord hanging member shown in FIG. 4.

[0015] FIG. 7 is a sectional view taken along line 7-7 of FIG. 4.

[0016] FIG. 8 is a front view of the hand-held hair dryer and holder assembly shown in FIG. 1 with one of the cord hanging members shown in phantom.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0017] FIG. 1 illustrates a hang-up hair dryer or hand-held hair dryer and holder assembly 10 according to the present invention. The assembly 10 includes a hand-held hair dryer 14 and a holder or housing 18. The holder 18 is adapted to be mounted on or fixed to a supporting surface (e.g., a vertical surface such as a wall, a horizontal surface such as a counter top or a table top, and the like). In the illustrated embodiment, the holder 18 is shown fixed to a vertically extending wall having a supporting surface 22 (FIG. 8). The holder 18 provides a location for storing the hair dryer 14 when the hair dryer 14 is not in operation. The hair dryer 14 is removable from the holder 18 for operation as is generally known. It should be understood that aspects of the present invention may be utilized on other types of hand-held hair dryers and holders, and the hair dryer 14 and the holder 18 are merely

shown and described as one such example.

[0018] The hand-held hair dryer 14 includes a handle portion 26 and a barrel or blower portion 30 interconnected with the handle portion 26. With reference to FIG. 2, a top portion of the holder 18 receives the barrel portion 30 and a lower portion of the holder 18 receives the handle portion. An off-on switch 34 is positioned on the handle portion 26 and is moveable between an OFF position and an ON position. A user actuates the switch 34 to control operation of the hair dryer 14. The switch 34 is configured to interrupt the flow of electrical power provided to the hair dryer 14 from a power supply via an electrical cord 38. The electrical cord 38 extends from a lower end of the handle portion 26 and includes a plug (not shown) which can be removably received in a power supply (e.g., an electrical outlet of a power supply). The cord 38 may extend directly from the hair dryer 14 to a power supply, or may extend from the hair dryer 14 to the holder 18 and then to a power supply. In other embodiments, a switch may be positioned on the holder 18 to interrupt the flow of electrical power provided to the hair dryer 14. In such embodiments, the end of the electrical cord remote from the hair dryer is often electrically connected to a terminal board supported by the corresponding holder. A second electrical cord may extend from the terminal board for connection to a power supply.

[0019] As illustrated in FIG. 8, the cord 38 includes a first portion 38a connected to the holder 18, a second portion 38b connected to the hair dryer 14, and a third portion 38c extending between the first and second portions 38a and 38b, respectively. The cord 38 also includes a fourth portion 38d connected to the holder 18. As used herein, connected does not specifically require an electrical or mechanical connection, but instead includes the first and fourth portions 38a and 38d contacting the holder 18 and the second portion 38b contacting the hair dryer 14. In the illustrated embodiment, the first and fourth portions 38a and 38d each contact a cord aperture 18a in the holder 18 and extend into a void between the holder 18 and the supporting surface 22. The cord apertures 18a afford regulation and adjustment of the amount or length of cord which extends to the hair dryer 14 and/or a power supply from the holder 18. Excess cord may be stored in the void. The excess cord may be wrapped around structure on the rear of the holder 18. In the illustrated embodiment, the cord 38 extends from the holder 18 through the cord aperture 18a to an electrical receptacle of a power supply spaced from the holder 18. In other embodiments, an electrical receptacle of a power source may be located on the supporting surface 22 adjacent the void. With continued

reference to FIG. 8, the second portion 38b is both mechanically and electrically connected to the hair dryer 14 as is generally known. The illustrated second portion 38b includes a strain relief. The illustrated third portion 38c includes coil cord. Other types of cord may be utilized in other embodiments. The length of the third portion 38c may vary (e.g., four feet, six feet, eight feet, and the like).

[0020] A cord hanging member or cord hanger 42 is connected to the top portion of the holder 18 to support the third portion 38c of the cord 38 when the hair dryer 14 is stored on the holder 18. The illustrated cord hanging member 42 includes a base portion 42a and a knob portion 42b connected to the base portion 42a. As illustrated in FIG. 8, the base portion 42a positions the knob portion 42b a distance from the holder 18 slightly larger than the diameter of the coil cord. In other embodiments, the knob portion 42b may be alternatively spaced from the holder 18.

[0021] The cord hanging member 42 is further illustrated in FIGS. 4-7. The base portion 42a includes bores 42c. As illustrated in FIG. 3, corresponding bores 18b are positioned on the rear surface of the holder 18. The illustrated bores 18b are blind bores that do not extend through to the front side of the holder 18. The cord hanging member 42 is removably connected to the holder 18 by inserting fasteners (e.g., threaded fasteners) through the bores 42c and into the bores 18b. The holder 18 includes two sets of bore 18b, thus allowing alternative placement of a single cord hanging member 42 (see FIG. 8), or placement of two cord hanging members 42 (see FIG. 1). In other embodiments, the bores 18b may be alternatively positioned on the holder 18. The cord hanging member 42 may be alternatively sized and shaped in other embodiments.

[0022] The illustrated holder 18 and cord hanging member 42 are each fabricated or molded from a plastic material as individual one-piece constructions. In other embodiments, the cord hanging member 42 may be integrally formed or connected with the holder 18. The holder 18 includes a pair of spaced through bores 18c which are adapted for passage therethrough of suitable fasteners (e.g., threaded fasteners) which connect the holder 18 to the supporting surface 22. In other embodiments, other means may be utilized to attach the holder to the supporting surface 22.

[0023] The embodiments described above and illustrated in the figures are presented by way of example only and are not intended as a limitation upon the concepts and principles of

the present invention. As such, it will be appreciated by one having ordinary skill in the art that various changes in the elements and their configuration and arrangement are possible without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention as set forth in the appended claims.